Public Document Pack

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11 June 2021

Dear Councillor

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at the meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** on Monday 14 June 2021 at 6.00 pm, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

11 **FOOD POVERTY REVIEW** (Pages 2 - 60)

To consider the draft Review of Food Poverty (to follow).

Yours sincerely

Chief Executive

Food Poverty Review – Proposed Next Stages and Timeline

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is not being asked to approve the final review document at its meeting on June 2021 but rather consider the draft document and its next steps.

June 2021

- First draft of Review document received by Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee to determine if further evidence needs to be gathered or if in principle, it is satisfied with the document
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers whether it wishes to draft recommendations (if any) at June or July meeting to go to full Council
- Forewords to be written by Chair and Controlling Group Spokesperson for inclusion in final draft to be considered at July 2021 meeting (deadline Friday 25 June 2021)

July 2021

- Further evidence is considered (if asked for at June 2021 meeting)
- Committee agrees final review document and recommendations (if any) to Council
- Full Council receives review at its July 2021 meeting

Review of Food Poverty

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Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

July 2021

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Section One

Foreword by the Chair and Controlling Group Spokesperson

An introduction to the review on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee by the Chair, Councillor C D Zosseder and the Controlling Group Spokesperson, Councillor M Rose.

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Foreword

Picture

Councillor Charlotte Zosseder
Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

" ."

Picture

Councillor Mark Rose
Controlling Group Spokesperson of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

" "

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Section Two

Scope and Process Report

An overview of the terms of reference of the review and the process of enquiry used in preparing the report

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Scope and Process Report

Introduction

2.1 The Council at its meeting held on 30 October 2019 made the following resolution that sets the terms of reference for the review:

"We note that there are 8 million people in this country who have trouble putting food on the table according to the UN. Over 500,000 people used Foodbanks in the UK last year.

The Trussell Trust alone distributed over 1.3m three-day emergency food supplies of people in crisis in the financial year 2017/18. Three million children are at risk of hunger during the school holidays and around 10% of the NHS Budget goes on treating diabetes and up to 1 million people live in food deserts in the UK.

We further note that the Government's commitment to the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals which apply internationally and domestically commits governments to ending hunger by 2030.

We resolve to ask Scrutiny to investigate the extent of the issue in the Dover District and what can be done to tackle it."

2.2 The last part of the resolution is highlighted as it sets the key objective of the scrutiny review, which is to identify the background to, and current levels of, food poverty in the Dover District and what can be done to reduce food poverty in the Dover District.

Stage 1: Methodology

2.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee approved its scope for the review and key witnesses in January 2020. However, any further work on this was halted by the emerging Covid-19 pandemic with the cancellation of meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. When meetings resumed remotely in June 2020, the review was postponed to Autumn 2020 in the hope that the situation would improve and meetings in person would be able to resume in late 2020. When it became apparent that this would not be the case Democratic Services, in co-operation with Digital Services, set out to identify the requirements that would be needed to conduct the review remotely

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and a number of meetings were held in late 2020 and early 2021 with the relevant witnesses that were willing to participate remotely.

2.4 The following witnesses were identified by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as groups that it would wish to speak to as part of the review:

Group 1

- BeChange (Aylesham)
- Dover Food Bank
- Deal Area Food Bank
- Trussell Trust (in the form of information and research produced on the subject of food poverty)
- Deal, Dover and Sandwich Age Concern
- Dover Outreach Centre
- Phoenix Centre (Sandwich)

Group 2

- Dover District Council Community Services
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Local Health Services
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Home Start (Dover)
- KCC Education Services
- KCC Social Services

2.5 These were broadly grouped as direct providers of food aid and referring agencies / relevant statutory agencies.

Stage 2: Research

2.3 In addition to the scoping report produced by Democratic Services, a number of members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee assisted with local knowledge in identifying potential witnesses for the Committee to interview. Councillor Helen

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Williams also contributed a number of additional pieces of evidence which are set out in Section 4.

2.4 Publicly available information, mostly relating to the national picture in respect of food poverty was also gathered.

2.5 There was also a number delays resulting from events outside of the control of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These were that there was a delay in producing the final review document as a result of the rescheduled and scheduled elections held on 6 May 2021 which required the redeployment of Democratic Services resources to support the work of the Elections team. This also coincided with the need for Democratic Services to prepare for the safe return to physical meetings in the Council Chamber following the expiration of the regulations permitting remote meetings. Finally, it should be noted that due to the lockdown measures in place during the course of the review it was not possible to consider any site visits.

Stage 3: Investigation

2.6 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee conducted a number of remote meetings at which evidence from witnesses was gathered.

2.7 There was a key witness (Department for Work and Pensions) that refused to participate in the review. A number of written questions were submitted to the Department for Work and Pensions as an alternative but no response was received to these. In addition, there were a small number of witnesses from the voluntary sector who did not respond to requests to meet with the committee or, such as the Deal Area Foodbank, were unable to meet with the Committee.

2.8 It had also been hoped originally to interview relevant representatives from local health services would be able to provide evidence around the health impact of food poverty in respect of young children and adults. While it was not possible to gather this information locally, there were a number of publicly available articles available as part of the research information that are able to provide a broad overview of the health impacts of food poverty.

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Stage 4: Final Analysis

2.9 Despite the challenges associated with conducting a review during the Covid-19 pandemic the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was able to gather information from most key sources. This included local food banks, voluntary groups, Dover District Council Community Services and Kent County Council (Education and Early Years).

2.10 However, the refusal of the Department for Work and Pensions to participate in the review or respond to the submitted written questions has significantly impacted on evidence gathering around the impact of benefits and pensions on the causes of food poverty. However, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was able to gather some publicly available information as well as anecdotal evidence and experience from other groups (such as referral agencies and food banks) on this issue.

2.11 On this basis it is felt that sufficient information has been gathered to enable the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to fulfil the remit of the review as set out by the reference from the full Council.

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Section Three

Research Report

Details of the issues examined by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Research Report

Introduction

3.1 The research report will set out a number of key concepts and definitions (paragraphs 3.3 – xx) and then the local information that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been able to gather as part of the review (paragraph xx).

3.2 This takes the form of primary evidence gathered from the remote meetings with key witnesses conducted by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and secondary evidence from a number of publications.

Definition of Food Poverty

3.3 The Department of Health[1] defines food poverty as:

"the inability to afford, or to have access to, food to make up a healthy diet".

3.4 The key drivers of food poverty can be summarised as:

- Low income
- High outgoings
- Food availability

3.5 Food poverty can lead to adverse impacts on the health status of individuals through the quantity and quality of food they have access to. Individuals with insufficient calories can be underweight; those with sufficient calories but insufficient vitamins and minerals can be nutrient deficient (which can lead to conditions such as rickets); and those with access to a high calorie, low nutrient food intake can be overweight. In addition, food insecurity can have an adverse mental health impact leading to stress, anxiety and depression. It is known that high energy / low nutrient diets can contribute towards hypertension, iron deficiency, and impaired liver function.

3.6 In addition, the impact of food poverty can be inter-generational, particularly for women where breast feeding requires a healthy diet to provide the nutrients necessary for

[1] Department of Health, Choosing a Better Diet: a food and health action plan, 2005

infant development. Poor diet in children has been shown to impact life expectancy and future health outcomes and conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, obesity, malnutrition, and a range of cancers are common diet-related diseases.[2]

3.7 The Trussell Trust publishes information related to its own food bank network twice a year. The figures for the period 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020 indicate the following primary reasons as to why households were referred to a food bank:

- 39% Low Income
- 17% Benefit Delays
- 15% Benefit Changes

Definition of Food Insecurity

3.8 The Food Standards Agency in 2007[3] defined food insecurity as

> 'Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.'

3.9 This can be further defined[4] as:

Food security	Individual certain in their ability to obtain food.
Mild food insecurity	Mild food insecurity will relate to uncertainty of an individual's ability to obtain food.
Moderate food insecurity	A person in moderate food insecurity will: • Have insufficient money or resources for a healthy diet (i.e. compromising on food quality, quantity and variety) • Uncertainty over their ability to obtain food

[2] British Medical Association, Health at a price: Reducing the impact of poverty, June 2017
[3] Food Standards Agency, Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey, 2007
[4] Public Health Northamptonshire, Presentation to Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board, November 2019

	• Occasionally have experienced skipped meals or run out of food
Severe food insecurity	A person in severe food insecurity will: • Have run out of food • Gone an entire day without eating at times during the day

3.10 The 'Food and You – Wave Five' survey for 2019 conducted by the Food Standards Agency found that 80% of respondents lived in households with high levels of food security, 10% lived in households with marginal food security and 10% lived in households with low or very low food security (i.e. the food insecure). The survey also found that 47% of respondents had made at least one change to their buying or eating arrangements for financial reasons.

3.11 The majority of respondents (83%) to the survey said that they had never worried about running out of food before there was money to buy more although there were some significant variations across groups as follows:

> "Age: A quarter (25%) of respondents aged between 16 and 24 mentioned they had worried about running out of food before there was money to buy more, whereas only 5% of over 75s said the same.
>
> Households with children: The proportion of respondents living with a child under the age of 6 who had worried about running out of food (29%) was double the proportion of respondents also living with a child under the age of 6 who had not (15%), and there was a similar pattern for those in households with children aged under 16.
>
> Household income: In the lowest income households 36% had worried about running out of food before there was money to buy more, and this proportion declined with increasing income to 5% of the highest income households."[5]

[5] Food and You Survey – Wave 5, Food Standards Agency, 2019

3.12 The UK Government added 10 questions concerning food insecurity to its Family Resources Survey in April 2019. The results of this are expected to be published in April 2021.

3.13 The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals agreed by world leaders, including the UK Government, in 2015 includes a commitment to end hunger.

'Food Deserts'

3.14 A report from the University of Sheffield in 2018 defined food deserts as:

"those areas of cities where cheap, nutritious food is virtually unobtainable. Car-less residents, unable to reach out-of-town supermarkets, depend on the corner shop where prices are high, products are processed and fresh fruit and vegetables are poor or non-existent."[6]

3.15 The report further defined food deserts as such:

- Food desert – an area containing two or fewer supermarkets/convenience stores.
- Deprived food desert – a food desert which is in the most deprived 25% of areas, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation measures produced by government in England, Wales and Scotland.
- "Normal" area – an area containing between three and seven supermarkets/convenience stores (the modal range of such stores in Great Britain).
- Food oasis – an area containing more than seven supermarkets/convenience stores

3.16 The report identified two deprived food deserts in Kent – one in the Dartford constituency and one in the Rochester and Strood constituency. There were no food deserts identified for the Dover District.

3.17 The study found that 41% of residents in a deprived food desert area did not own a car (compared to 23% nationally). There were also lower levels of online shopping in deprived food desert areas.

[6] 'Can everyone access affordable, nutritious food? A picture of Britain's deprived food deserts.', University of Sheffield, 2018

3.18 The Consumer Data Research Centre (CDRC) has since the University of Sheffield study identified e-food deserts in its E-Food Desert Index (EFDI) – areas where "remote and rural neighbourhoods which suffer the dual disadvantage of comparatively poor access to physical retail opportunities alongside limited provision of online groceries"[7].

3.19 The EFDI identifies a number of areas in the Dover District in the highest scoring decile for e-food deserts, primarily in the Little Stour and Ashstone Ward and the Town and Castle Ward. In addition, many of the rural areas in the district are in the second and third highest scoring decile for being an e-food desert.

'Holiday Hunger'

3.20 The phrase 'holiday hunger' is traditionally used to refer to increased levels of food insecurity experienced by children and households during the school holidays when access to free school meals ceased. The advent of 'holiday clubs' to continue to provide access to free meals for school children is one way of combating this where available.

Definition of Food Aid

3.21 DEFRA defined 'food aid' in 2014[8] as a:

> "range of support activities aiming to help people meet food needs, often on a short-term basis, which contribute to relieving the symptoms of food poverty and insecurity."

3.22 Food aid should provide a balanced nutritional diet and is often in the form of a multi-day provision. There are a number of charitable and community groups in the UK that either act as food banks distributing food parcels or are involved in the redistribution of surplus food to various charitable or community groups. For example, the Trussell Trust provides a network of food banks in the UK while Fareshare is involved in the redistribution of surplus food to charities to use for meals.

How is food aid accessed?

[7] Consumer Data Research Centre, Assessing the presence of e-food deserts in the UK, https://www.cdrc.ac.uk/research/retail/assessing-the-presence-of-e-food-deserts-in-the-uk/
[8] Household Food Security in the UK: a review of food aid, DEFRA, 2014

3.23 The majority of food aid in the UK is accessed through a referral system from a relevant body and is usually intended as short-term support. Care professionals such as health visitors, schools, local authority social/family services and GPs identify people in need and issue them with a food bank voucher. However, a minority of food banks will permit self-referral to their services and some will permit self-referral in either the first instance or following a formal referral. Most food banks require that the food parcel be collected from them, though some will deliver food parcels.

3.24 In terms of the length of support provided, this varies by food banks with many imposing a limit on the number of times a food parcel can be received.

3.25 A survey conducted for the Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) found that only 27% of food banks did not require referrals and put no limit on the number of times an individual could receive support.[9]

3.26 A study conducted for IFAN estimated that there are at least 961 independent food banks (as of figures published in December 2020) operating across the UK with a further 1,200 provided by the Trussell Trust. Over half of the independent food banks are operated by a Christian faith group. The IFAN estimates that the combined total of at least 2,166 food banks is more probably over 3,000 nationally when independent food aid providers operating outside of the food bank model are taken into consideration.

3.27 The majority of independent food banks (75%) were established within the last nine years according to IFAN.

3.28 The most recent figures for emergency food parcel distribution by the Trussell Trust and others are set out later in this report.

Definitions of Poverty

3.29 There is no single definition of poverty and there has been no official UK-wide measure of poverty since 2015. Poverty can also be measured in different ways, resulting in differing estimates as to the level of poverty.

[9] A survey of food banks operating independently of The Trussell Trust food bank network, Independent Food Aid Network, 2019

3.30 However, poverty should not be taken to mean purely 'low income' as costs such as childcare, housing, costs associated with disability and different levels of savings and assets will affect households differently. The condition of being in poverty is potentially dynamic and not a static condition with individuals moving in and out of poverty over time and with some groups being more vulnerable than others to the risk of experiencing poverty.

3.31 The Child Poverty Act 2010 (subsequently repealed by the Welfare and Reform Act 2016) set out differences between:

- **Absolute Poverty:** People living below a certain income threshold or unable to afford certain basic goods and services
- **Relative Poverty:** People whose financial resources fall below an average income threshold for the economy, for instance those families with income below 60% of the median
- **Persistent Poverty:** People who experience long periods of relative poverty. The Office for National Statistics defines persistent poverty as experiencing relative low income both in the current year and at least two out of the three preceding years.

3.32 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) in its 2017 study (published in 2019) estimated that 7.8% of the UK population (equivalent to roughly 4.7 million people) lived in persistent poverty. The study found that "an estimated 2.4 million working people were in poverty in 2017, of which 31% also experienced in-work poverty in 2016".[10]

3.33 The ONS study found that UK persistent poverty rates had been relatively static (at a small decrease in levels) between 2008 – 2017.

3.34 A study by the Social Metrics Commission in 2018[11] found that 14.2 million people (8.4 million working age adults, 4.5 million children and 1.4 million pension age adults) in the UK were in poverty. The study also found that 2.7 million people were less than 10% below the poverty line and a further 2.5 million people were less than 10% above

[10] Persistent poverty in the UK and EU: 2017 Comparisons of persistent poverty between UK and other EU countries, Office for National Statistics, 6 June 2019

[11] Social Metrics Commission, A new measure of poverty for the UK: The final report of the Social Metrics Commission, September 2018

the poverty line, meaning that relatively small changes in their circumstances could move them in or out of poverty.

3.35 The Joseph Rowntree Foundation define poverty as being "when a person's resources, (income, financial assets, goods, and services such as Health and Children's) are not sufficient to meet their minimum needs that are considered reasonable by standards in society".[12]

3.36 The Foundation identifies three needs which it uses to quantify whether people's resources are sufficient to fulfil their needs as follows:

1. The range, sustainability, quantity and quality of those resources – taking into account not only material, but also in-kind and informal resources. In respect of informal or indirect resources these may be insecure and arbitrary nature and significant reliance on them may not be sustainable.

2. Their personal circumstances and characteristics – while basic needs are all the same, personal circumstances such as age, health status, disability, family circumstances, etc. will have an impact.

3. The choices people make – for example, if a person, no matter what their level of income, is spending their available resources on non-essentials, then they may neglect their own or their family's needs. But it is important to recognise that the choices available to people living in poverty are generally much more constrained.

3.37 According to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's English Indices of Deprivation 2019, the Dover District has several areas in the 10% most deprived in England (as well as several areas in the least deprived deciles) according to the Indexes of Multiple Deprivation at a Super Output Area level.

Universal Credit

3.38 As part of the review, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was provided with information in respect of Universal Credit from Dover District Council's Community Services team. This is summarised in paragraphs 3.37 – 3.40 below.

[12] JRF Programme Paper, Anti-poverty strategies for the UK, A DEFINITION OF POVERTY, Chris Goulden and Conor D'Arcy September 2014

3.39 The monthly allowance for a single person aged under 25 is £342.72, £409.89 for single claimants over 25, £488.59 for joint claimants over 25 and £594.04 for claimants with one person over 25. This figure includes the uplift due to the COVID 19 pandemic of an extra £20 per week which was extended until September 2021.

3.40 On top of the standard allowance claimants may be eligible for a child element, childcare cost element, limited capability for work related element, carer element and housing cost element. As a consequence, the level of Universal Credit will vary from person to person depending on their circumstances. The housing costs part is only for people who are renting although for those renting in the private sector this element will not be sufficient to cover the full rent in all likelihood so they will have to cover the excess from their standard allowance. People who have a mortgage will have to find the cost of all their mortgage from the standard allowance. In contrast, those people in affordable housing (social and council) will not have to find the top-up.

3.41 For those people who are in work but still eligible to claim universal credit, for every £1 they earn 65p will be deducted from their standard allowance. However, this deduction does not apply to the first £200 of their income.

3.42 It is not difficult to see that for those individuals who are unemployed their outgoings may exceed the level of Universal Credit that they are in receipt of and as a result they can end up in debt. As a consequence, some may end up being referred to food banks for short term assistance. It should be noted that while cooking from scratch with fresh ingredients may be a cheaper option, it does require the right utensils for cooking and for those on low incomes these may be difficult to afford. There may also be issues of capability to do this and learning to cook is an issue. Furthermore, as a result of the pandemic, there may be households who were just about managing or comfortable before but who are now experiencing unemployment and will struggle with high mortgages when the mortgage holiday come to an end. They may also have other outgoings that were manageable before they were made unemployed that they now cannot manage.

Universal Credit and Benefit Overview for Dover District

3.43 At the start of the review figures for September 2020 indicated that 11,231 people were claiming Universal Credit in the Dover District. This increased slightly to 11,511 as of March 2021. As of September 2020, 7,235 of these claimants were not in employment,

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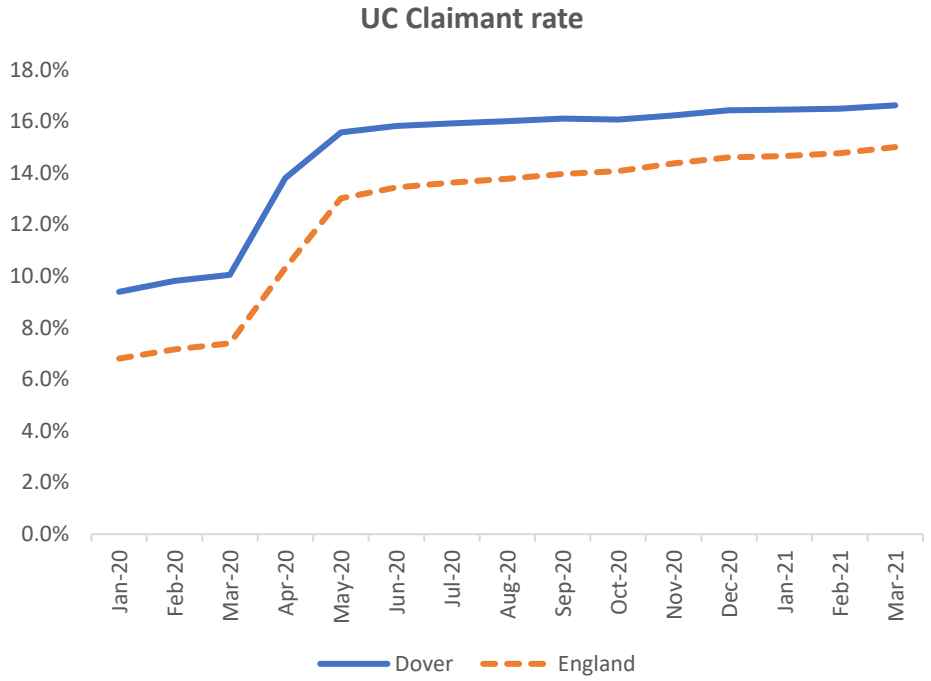
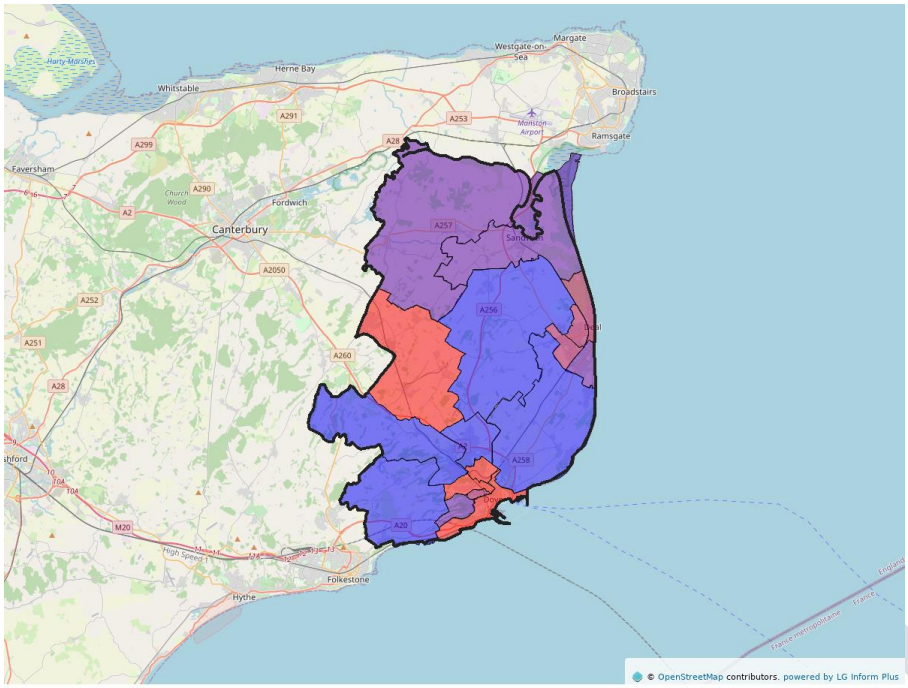
whilst 3,916 were in employment. For March 2021, 7,512 of these claimants were not in employment, whilst 3,908 were in employment.[13]

3.44 There were 9,587 households (18.3% of households) on Universal Credit in the Dover District as of February 2021. This compared to the Kent average of 16.5% of households and the English average of 18.6% of households.



Universal Credit: Ward Map

[13] Claims made to Universal Credit, Statistical Bulletin, Kent County Council, https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/109306/Universal-Credit-claimants-in-Kent.pdf



No. of people on Universal Credit (Oct 2020)

- ≥ 167 ≤ 345 claimants
- > 345 ≤ 485 claimants
- > 485 ≤ 837 claimants
- > 837 ≤ 1,468 claimants

Data Table for Universal Credit Ward Map	
Alkham & Capel-le-Ferne	167
Aylesham, Eythorne & Shepherdswell	999
Buckland	1,109
Dover Downs & River	233
Eastry Rural	345
Guston, Kingsdown & St Margaret's-at-Cliffe	328
Little Stour & Ashstone	412
Maxton & Elms Vale	376
Middle Deal	837
Mill Hill	787
North Deal	672
Sandwich	419
St Radigund's	1,452
Tower Hamlets	799
Town & Castle	1,468
Walmer	485
Whitfield	324

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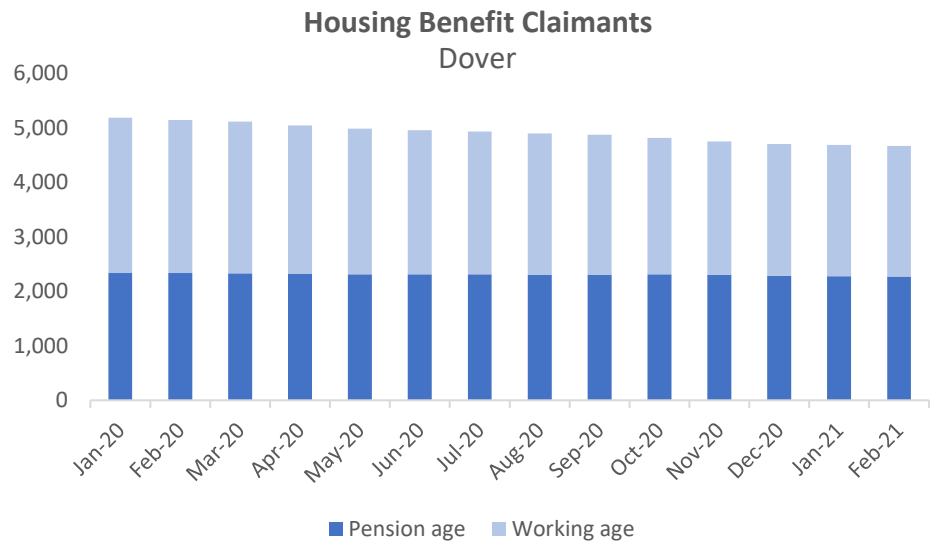
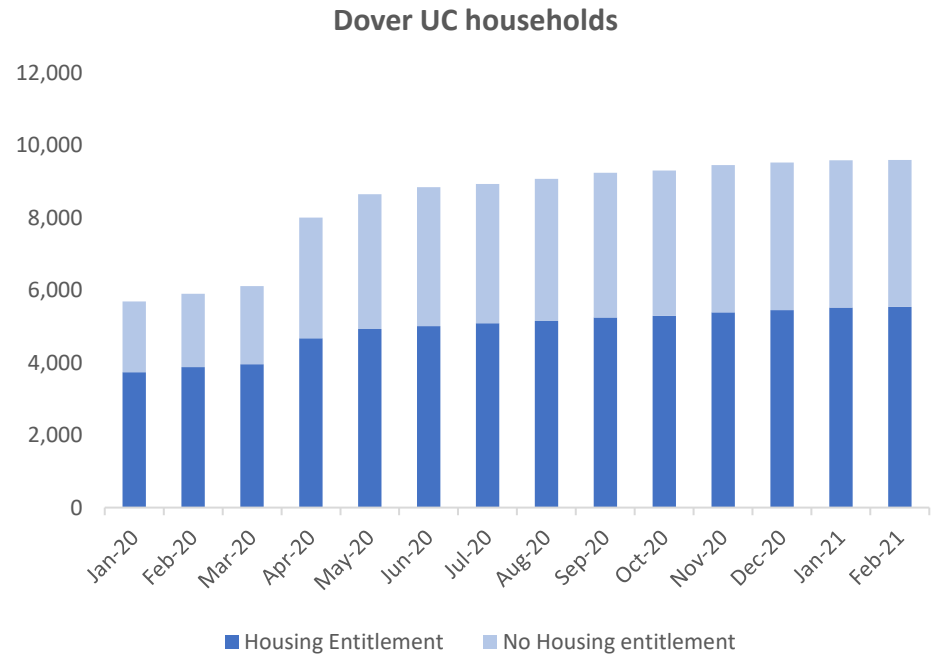
3.45 There were also 7,000 people in the Dover District on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (Furlough) as of February 2021. This equated to 15.8% which was consistent with the Kent average (15.7%) and the English average of 15.6%.

3.46 There were 2,273 pension age and 2,396 of working age housing benefit claimants in the Dover District (as at February 2021) for a total of 4,669 claimants of housing benefit. This was the 6th highest in Kent (out of 12 districts).





National Data on Food Bank Usage and Food Insecurity

(a) Trussell Trust Network

3.47 The Trussell Trust support a nationwide network of 1,200 food banks which accounts for approximately two-thirds of all UK food banks. They provide emergency food and support to people. The emergency food takes the form of a 3-day food parcel.

3.48 The Trussell Trust provides the following figures for use of its network since 2014/15 in the table below. It should be noted (a) the Trussell Trust figures do not cover independent food banks outside of its network and (b) that these figures relate to volume (i.e. number of uses not individuals) and the average level of use for 2020/21 was 2.4 referrals per person.

Year	UK	England	South East
2015/16	1,112,395	863,870	97,680
2016/17	1,201,302	920,170	109,235
2017/18	1,354,388	1,046,807	124,898
2018/19	1,606,244	1,235,892	149,587
2019/20	1,906,625	1,488,038	199,242
2020/21	2,537,198	2,090,989	302,905

3.49 For the period April 2020 – March 2021, the most recent full year figures for the Trussell Trust network of food banks, they report a 33% increase nationally in the number of emergency food parcels on the previous year, distributing a total of 2.5 million. Of that 2.5 million, 980,000 of these went to children.[14]

3.50 Over the last 5 years the Trussell Trust report a 128% increase in the number of emergency food parcels provided rising from 1,112,395 in 2015-16 to 2,537,198 in 2020-21. As mentioned, there was a significant increase between 2019-20 (1,906,625) and 2020-21. For the South East of England (excluding London), the Trussell Trust network provided 302,905 emergency food parcels of which 122,333 were for children.

3.51 The Trussell Trust express the view that hunger in the UK isn't about food but rather about lack of income and identify the three major drivers of food bank use within their network as follows:

[14] End of Year Stats, Trussell Trust (https://www.trusselltrust.org/news-and-blog/latest-stats/end-year-stats/)

- Problems with the benefits system (delays, inadequacy and reductions)
- Challenging life experiences or ill-health
- Lack of formal or informal support

3.52 The Trussell Trust also provide data broken down by local authority area as part of the Year End 2020-21 figures. These show the following for the Dover District:

Year	Number of parcels given to adults	Number of parcels given to children	Total number of parcels distributed	Number of distribution centres
2019-20	3,876	2,423	6,299	8
2020-21	3,723	2,359	6,082	3

3.53 It should be noted that these figures are based on the local authority area of the distribution centre and not necessarily the location that the food parcel was provided at.

3.54 There were 100,000 households nationally who received support from the Trussell Trust for the first time between April – June 2020.

(b) Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN)

3.55 The membership of the IFAN includes over 400 food banks. The latest published figures (December 2020)[15] for IFAN demonstrated an increase of 123% in food bank usage when comparing November 2019 with November 2020. The data provided by 83 independent food banks to IFAN found a 110% increase in the number of food parcels provided when comparing the period February to November 2019 with the same period in 2020.

3.56 When comparing the number of people supported by the 83 independent food banks in the data this saw a 136% increase when comparing November 2019 (12,784) to November 2020 (30,225) and a 141% increase when comparing the period February – November 2019 (117,530) with the same period in 2020 (227,275).

(c) Food Standards Agency (FSA)

[15] Independent Food Bank Emergency Food Parcel Distribution in the UK February to November 2019 and 2020, IFAN, https://uploads.strikinglycdn.com/files/f94e04eb-00ff-4ab1-99ae-6a901ee885b4/IFAN%20REPORT%2022.12.20%20FINAL.pdf

3.57 The qualitative research undertaken by the FSA[16] found that the lived experience of people experiencing food insecurity was as follows:

- Basic costs rising (such as utility bills or caring for parents or children) impacted access to affordable food.
- Impacts reached far beyond missed meals: participants were experiencing complex and interlocking physical, emotional, social and financial challenges.
- People were unable to access sufficient help to meet their needs, or alternatively were unaware of support that may be available or unwilling to access charitable help due to perceived stigma.

3.58 This is supported by data collected by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) which found that millions of people used a food bank or charity during this time. Its survey for July 2020 found that:

- 9% of the population had had food delivered to their home by a food charity or food bank in the month to July, with households with children over-represented. This does not include those households that visited food banks in person during this period.

- One in six people (16%) report cutting down on the size of their meals or skipping them altogether due to a lack of money. Again, households with children were over-represented.

3.59 The reasons for requiring support from a food bank or charity were both economic- and health (Covid-19) related. One in four (26%) of those that used a food bank or charity did so because they were self-isolating or shielding due to Covid-19. One in five (20%) advised that they did not have enough money to buy food.

3.60 The majority (81%) of households that needed support from a food bank in June or July 2020 did not have someone working. This was unchanged from before the pandemic. In addition, only 4% of people that needed to use a food bank in June or July were furloughed indicating that the Government's Job Retention Scheme had a positive impact on households.

[16] The lived experience of food insecurity under Covid-19, A Bright Harbour Collective Report for the Food Standards Agency, July 2020 (https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/fsa-food-insecurity-2020_-report-v5.pdf)

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3.61 The Trussell Trust's research found that one in five (22%) of those that used a food bank during the pandemic were waiting for a decision on a benefit application, or the first payment. Of those that were waiting, one in five (20%) had not received a decision on their first payment for six weeks or longer.

3.62 The Trussell Trust data indicated that low income remained a significant factor in why households needed to turn to support from food banks and the majority (95%) of households needing support from food banks were living in relative poverty after housing costs.

3.63 Finally, the study found that younger people (25-44) and BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic)[17] groups were more likely to have needed support from food banks during the pandemic.

(d) The Food Foundation

3.64 A study by The Food Foundation[18] on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on food insecurity found that 22% of households were financial worse off since the pandemic and that 4.7 million adults nationally had experienced food insecurity in the six months prior to March 2021.

3.65 The report identified the following drivers behind food insecurity. It should be noted that respondents were able to specify more than one reason.

- 55% - not enough money;
- 33% - isolation;
- 23% - lack of supply; and
- 8% - other reasons.

3.66 In addition, the report identified some groups as having higher levels of food insecurity than others as followed:

- Health problems/disability – 5 times more likely to experience food insecurity when compared to those without health problems/disability

[17] The BAME designation is used as this was cited in the original source material but it is noted that the appropriateness of this designation has been subject to debate recently.

[18] The Food Foundation, A CRISIS WITHIN A CRISIS: The Impact of Covid-19 on Household Food Security, March 2021, https://foodfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/FF_Impact-of-Covid_FINAL.pdf

- Severely clinically vulnerable – 2 times more likely to experience food insecurity when compared to the average
- Food sector workers – 1.5 times more likely to experience food insecurity when compared to non-food sector workers
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic – 2 times more likely to experience food insecurity when compared to white British

3.67 Furthermore, 2.3 million children nationally lived in households (or 12% of households with children) affected by food insecurity in the six months prior to March 2021.

Dover District Experience

3.68 Over the course of the review, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee gathered evidence from a number of groups, including local food banks. The majority of this was provided verbally to the Committee and can be found in the included Minutes of those meetings (see Section Four – Inquiry Reports).

3.69 It should be noted that the review was conducted during the pandemic and this has had an impact on the availability of witnesses and the demand for food bank and associated services.

3.70 The Dover District does not have any recognised food deserts in the 2018 University of Sheffield study, although there are areas where choice is limited. The Consumer Data Research Centre E-Food Desert Index (EFDI) does however identify several predominantly rural areas in the district that score high on the EFDI, with two areas in the top decile. However, none of the areas in the district are in the top 1,000 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) for England. In the Dover District the areas in the top decile by LSOA were E01024249 covering the Aycliffe and Western Heights area (Town and Castle Ward) and E01024206 covering the Preston and Stourmouth area (Little Stour and Ashstone Ward). These were ranked 1,389 and 3,474 respectively.

3.71 It is difficult to provide conclusive figures for food bank usage in the Dover District as not all groups contacted responded to the Committee's enquires. Furthermore, the nature of provision was not consistent across all groups and some of the groups had only started to provide meals as part of the response to the pandemic. However, the fact that additional groups started to provide food aid in the pandemic does demonstrate that there was an increased need.

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3.72 The Dover Food Bank has provided information which is illustrative of the growing levels of support provided over the last five years as well as the impact of the pandemic.

3.73 Dover Food Bank reported a significant spike in activity in April 2020 which is shown in the yearly figures for 2020 in the table below. For April 2020, Dover Food Bank supported 514 people with 3 days' worth of food compared to 239 people supported in April 2021.

3.74 However, despite this spike in April 2020 the figures for the 12 months to end of April 2021 (3,993 people supported) when compared to the 12 months to end April 2020 (3,935 people supported) demonstrate that there has not yet been an overall commensurate decrease in demand since then.

Dover Food Bank	Provided 3 days of emergency food 2016 – 1,974 people supported 2017 – 2,400 people supported 2018 – 3,042 people supported 2019 – 3,300 people supported 2020 – 4,346 people supported	The most common circumstance for people needing to access the food bank since covid-19 was unemployed families or those on furlough for less than 100% income. The impact of switching over from benefits to Universal Credit was also a factor.
Deal Food Bank	TBA – information requested	

3.75 The following broad conclusions can be drawn based on the evidence provided to the Committee as follows:

- The local community and voluntary sector were the main providers of emergency food aid in the district. Several of these providers focussed on specific geographical areas or communities.

- The coronavirus pandemic has adversely impacted on those already suffering from food insecurity in many cases. This included those who had with support been able to stay out of food bank referrals before the pandemic. The figures for April 2020 from Dover Food Bank show a doubling of demand compared to

a year later in April 2021, and their figures for the year 2020 compared with 2019 show an increase of approximately 1,000 people supported with 3 days' worth of food.

- While there are no recognised food deserts, there are a number of predominantly rural areas where access to supermarkets or other support was limited without travelling by car or public transport.

- That a number of interviewed groups reported the period of initial switchover to Universal Credit was a significant pressure on food insecurity.

- That households with children were affected locally in broadly the same proportion as shown in the national figures. It was recognised that early assistance for children in tackling food insecurity was very important for long term health outcomes.

- That there was a need for education and skills training to assist some households with budgeting and preparing meals.

- All of the groups who met with the committee had reported increases in referrals or usage during the pandemic. However, figures provided by the Dover Food Bank show a background of historical year-on-year increase in food bank usage over the last five years. This is consistent with national figures showing increasing year-on-year demand for food bank services.

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- The lived experience of food insecurity under Covid-19, A Bright Harbour Collective Report for the Food Standards Agency, July 2020 (https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/fsa-food-insecurity-2020_-report-v5.pdf)
- Claims made to Universal Credit, Statistical Bulletin, Kent County Council, https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/109306/Universal-Credit-claimants-in-Kent.pdf

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Section Four

Inquiry Reports

Evidence gathered during the course of the review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Inquiry Report 1

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (30 November 2020)

The Chairman welcomed the invited attendees to the meeting and thanked them for attending to answer the Committee's questions in respect of the levels of Food Poverty in the Dover District.

Dover Food Bank (Jonathan Wheeler)

The Committee was advised that the Dover Food Bank was set-up by Christians Together in Dover and was part of the Trussell Trust network of food banks. It covered Dover and the surrounding areas such as Lydden, Temple Ewell, Whitfield, Guston and St Margaret's-at-Cliffe.

The services of the food bank were accessed by referral from a wide range of agencies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Porchlight, the NHS, social services, schools, housing associations and the Dover outreach centre.

The referring agency would provide up to 3 vouchers with each voucher equating to 3 days of emergency food. The 3-voucher limit applied per crisis. The aim was to support people/households through the crisis by helping them access the assistance they needed rather than into food bank dependency. Pre-Covid-19 this would involve meeting with people and assessing their needs and any additional services they required but due to the restrictions around the Covid-19 pandemic this meant that they were only able to deliver the food parcels.

For the 12 months ending October 2020, the Dover Food Bank had:

- Provided 3 days of emergency food to 4,172 people which equated to 36 ¼ tons of food
- Provided 4 ½ tons of food per month
- 38% of those helped were children
- Had seen a 26% increase year-on-year
- Seen a large spike in demand in April 2020
- Maintained food stocks through local donations from people and organisations

The Dover Food Bank was not in receipt of Council grant funding and obtained its food through donations.

Q1. How do you get your referrals?

The majority of referrals to the Dover Food Bank came from the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) although a small number of self-referrals were accepted. This was seen as a good route as the CAB could provide a range of additional support services beyond food vouchers.

In contrast, pre-covid a large number of the referrals came from the Dover Gateway and through work with housing associations and porchlight.

Q2. What were the most common circumstances for referral?

The most common circumstance for people needing to access the food bank since covid-19 was unemployed families or those on furlough for less than 100% income. The impact of switching over from benefits to Universal Credit was also a factor.

In addition, there were also a significant number of people moving into the area with needs.

Q3. How do people choose their food?

Pre-covid it had been more than just about food and there had been a tailored checklist that asked what they liked and needed.

Since covid-19 these questions were asked by the referring agency.

Q4. What if the need goes beyond the voucher provision?

The Dover Food Bank was a crisis support provider rather than an on-going support provider so the 3 voucher limit was useful. However, the provision of food would be extended in circumstances such as when waiting 5 weeks for Universal Credit. The referring agency would provide guidance on the duration of support required.

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In some circumstances the Dover Food Bank could provide support to households 2 – 3 times over a 6 month period.

While it was unusual for the Dover Food Bank to end support, it would do so if justified. However, it would also continue supporting for longer if a real need existed.

Q5. How has demand compared to previous years?

The support was provided on a demand basis and donations had always been sufficient to meet the need. The demand for each year was as followed:

2016 – 1,974 people supported
2017 – 2,400 people supported
2018 – 3,042 people supported
2019 – 3,300 people supported

Dover Big Local – Dover Pantry (Anita Luckett)

Dover Big Local was a committee led organization that was funded through a lottery grant and operated in a variety of areas. It was traditionally a grant provider rather than a grant recipient. It operated from a community hub in the Charlton Centre and following a period of temporary closure due covid-19 restrictions provided advice on finances, employment, housing and other areas in a covid safe environment. An online pop-up business school would provide free training in December 2020.

The provision of emergency food supplies by Dover Big Local was a temporary measure that arose from people with short term needs (such as running out of food before their next payment) coming to the hub. It was not intended to be a long-term form of assistance and had been operated with support from Morrisons supermarket.

The Dover Pantry had been created by Dover Big Local initially in conjunction with Southern Housing Group as part of the 'Your Local Pantry' network. Additional funding and support were provided as the project developed by Dover Town Council, Together4Dover and The Raymond Cook Fund. Southern Housing, though Amber Construction, had refurbished unit 16 at the Charlton Centre which was next to the Dover Big Local hub. Dover Big Local had

recently formed a Community Interest Company (CIC) which enabled it to seek additional funding streams that were not previously open to Dover Big Local.

The Dover Pantry was not intended as a crisis support provider and instead if offered longer-term support by providing access to reduced cost food for its members for a membership fee of a £5 per week.

The Dover Pantry would also provide food education and budgeting skills to give people the tools to make their own nutritional meals. It would teach 20 – 25 people on its cooking course and they would be able to eat what they made.

The main source of food would be through Fare Share although Morrisons also provided some of the food.

The Dover Pantry had hired a manager with experience in the food sector to set-up the business and as part of the Your Local Pantry network support had been provided with advice on how to work with Fare Share and run the franchise. It had received funding from several sources, including Dover Town Council and was seeking additional match funding.

The Dover Pantry would open in January 2021 and was intended to be financially self-supporting by the end of the year.

Together 4 Dover (Deacon Michelle Legumi)

Together4Dover operated under the umbrella of Dover Big Local. It had been formed during the first lockdown and developed from providing support with shopping and prescription collection into providing hot meals and surplus food.

During the first lockdown (April – July 2020) the group had over 80 volunteers and supplied 800 hot meals to 50 households as well as other forms of support. This included assisting 20 rough sleepers referred by Porchlight.

The food support was provided on a referral only basis through a number of organisations for Dover town centre and the surrounding area.

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From the second restriction measures starting in September 2020, the group had only 15 volunteers and provided shopping and prescription collection and fresh free food. The support was again accessed on a referral basis only. It had provided dairy, meat and vegetables to 22 families to supplement food banks.

The support was for 1 month and included one off support for utilities if required. It would continue all the time the group had sufficient volunteers to deliver.

Together4Dover had received £2,000 of funding from Dover District Council under the covid grant scheme as well as a further grant of £7,500.

The Beacon Church provided cooking courses for up to six people with learning needs each year to develop budgeting and cooking skills. Pre-covid a Sunday lunch was provided at footprints for 30 – 40 people.

The intention was to provide a wrap-around support service such as that offered by the Food Pantry or Community Café.

Dover Outreach Centre (Noel Beamish)

The Dover Outreach Centre had been formed as a charity under the umbrella of Christians Together in 2016 in recognition that Dover lacked any form of night shelter. It now operated a drop-in centre weekday mornings and offered facilities for a simple breakfast, laundry, showers, lockers, use as a postal address, general advice and counselling (including mental health) for its users. They also operated the Winter Night Shelter.

The shelter was based in Snargate Street with the 'Drop In' on the ground floor and a suite of rooms (17) on the upper floors that could be used as a stepping stone into permanent accommodation. The majority of the residents were former rough sleepers. A community café was planned for April 2021 and would involve people paying what they could afford to use it. This was to ensure that no one went hungry. There would also be training on cooking and other skills such as a budgeting that would empower people to look after themselves and live better lives. Judith Shilling, the leader of the former Dover Soup Kitchen, was involved with the community café.

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The Dover Outreach Centre had received some funding from Dover District Council's covid fund and also from the Kent Community Foundation. However, the aim was to develop in a sustainable manner in the future with less reliance on grants and donations.

Over the last four years, the Dover Outreach Centre had seen over 600 people and housed 150 working closely with Dover District Council, Porchlight and other agencies and charities.

BeChange (Angela Doggett)

BeChange were based in Aylesham and had been operating for 23 years. It worked with communities throughout the Dover District, providing support with skills and employment, finance (including help with accessing benefits), housing, families and relationships. It was based in Aylesham and provided support in rural areas in the district such as, but not limited to, Ash, Elvington, Goodnestone and Nonington. The services were accessed through a mixture of referrals from other bodies and self-referrals.

Before the first lockdown, BeChange circulated surplus food to those in need which helped to keep them out of the food bank system. The 'community fridge' idea allowed people to come and collect surplus food and avoided the stigma of going to a food bank. There were currently 40 people collecting surplus food from BeChange every Friday.

Prior to the covid-19 pandemic, BeChange had seen an increase in food and fuel poverty as well as issues linked to the transition from benefits to Universal Credit. Since the start of the pandemic the level of need had increased as had the range of causes behind it.

BeChange had suspended normal operations during the first lockdown but set-up an emergency food programme from 3 April 2020. BeChange provided 10,000 meals during the first lockdown and had continued to provide support after the lockdown had ended. To date it had provided 13,000 meals. During the lockdown it had also received referrals from the council's community hub.

During the first lockdown, those that had received food support from BeChange were on low income and had struggled to shop in a different way as restrictions were imposed. It also provided 150 emergency food parcels.

BeChange worked with Deal Food Bank and during the first lockdown received referrals for 24 food vouchers. Since the lockdown it had received referrals for a further 24 vouchers.

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In addition to this through its cooking courses it provided valuable skills for families, adults and teenagers and they got to eat what they cooked.

The funding for its operations was provided from a mix of capital and revenue funding from a number of organisations.

Cinque Ports Community Kitchen (Stephanie Hayman)

The Cinque Ports Community Kitchen operated from a base at the Chequers Inn and was a social business teaching people to cook meals from scratch on a limited budget. The classes were provided in groups of 8 – 10 and the issue of proper nutrition was addressed through cooking with fresh ingredients. Cinque Ports provided classes for approximately 250 people per year – some through open access classes and some through referral. A survey of those who had attended the classes found that approximately 90% would change some habits as a result of what they had learnt such as eating less take away foods and more fresh food. In addition, a number would go on to work in the catering industry as a result. The Cinque Ports Community Kitchen had a strong relationship with Whole School Meals.

In addition to these social business courses, they also offered on a commercial basis recreational cooking classes, dining, etc.

The classes had stopped in March 2020 due to the covid-19 pandemic and a chilled and reheated meals service had been started instead which covered Deal, Sandwich and surrounding areas. It provided 5 meals a week (a £4 main meal to be reheated and a desert) which was subsidised by the Big Lottery to make affordable. This service would be continued until March 2021.

The business model for Cinque Ports meant that it did not have core funding and the closest it had to this was the funding received for specific projects such as its meal delivery service. It also earned income from its commercial courses.

The main users of the service were older people who could not go out and younger people who were shielding for medical reasons due to covid-19. They were not dealing with those in extreme poverty but rather those who had trouble accessing nutritious meals. This was not

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due to issues with the availability of food (a food desert) but rather people who due to health problems or other reasons were unable to cook for themselves.

Dover District Council Community Services

The Head of Community and Digital Services advised that the Council was a long-term partner of the community and voluntary sector in the district and had invested £225,000 in grant funding for it in the last year. The Council had provided c.£100,000 in grant funding to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) which played a vital role in supporting people in need and access the assistance they required. The Council had supported numerous projects over the years that had positively impacted on the community.

The voluntary sector provided hope and inspiration and through multi-agency working could make a real difference to people's lives. There was a need for a strong framework identifying the role of each organisation, its expertise, the potential funding streams available and ensuring that value for money was achieved.

It was recognised that many people were too proud to ask for help they were entitled to receive and that they wanted to maintain their independence. They could be helped to improve their quality of life in a variety of ways by providing the skills they needed to do this.

During the first lockdown, the Dover District Community Hub had operated 24/7 with 120 members of staff and worked closely with other public sector agencies, faith groups, town and parish councils and the voluntary and community sector.

The Chairman thanked everyone who attended for their time, the good work they undertook in the community and their valuable contributions to the Committee's Review of Food Poverty.

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Inquiry Report 2

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (11 January 2021)

The Chairman welcomed the invited attendees to the meeting and thanked them for attending to answer the Committee's questions in respect of the levels of Food Poverty in the Dover District.

Kent County Council (Cllr S S Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services)

Councillor S S Chandler advised that in addition to her own Cabinet Portfolio she was representing Councillor R Long, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills.

Kent County Council (KCC) provided a range of support for families, including assistance for families with managing everyday life and ensuring that children attended schools and had access to free school meals where eligible. There were also a number of projects such as proper nutrition and helping families budget for food that KCC supported.

Since the start of lockdown as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, KCC had continued to provide school places for vulnerable children and the children of key workers, including the provision of free school meals. It was recognised that not all families that would be eligible for free school meals were registered and schools were encouraging eligible families to do so.

During the October 2020 half term, KCC had distributed 20,000 supermarket vouchers worth £15 per child to those families who were eligible for free school meals. For the Christmas holidays, 31,984 supermarket vouchers worth £30 per child had been distributed to those eligible for free school meals. The vouchers were predominantly through ASDA or Tesco, although schools had local flexibility to vary this where these stores were not available such as in Sandwich where Co-Op vouchers had been provided. In contrast with the October 2020 vouchers, the vouchers at Christmas were automatically sent directly to eligible families and did not need to be applied for. Arrangements were also being put in place for the February 2021 half-term. The Government had made funding available for free school meals to be provided for the Easter 2021 holiday and KCC was waiting on further details. The success of the voucher schemes had seen an increase in take up for free school meals.

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It was recognised that early assistance was very important for long term outcomes and KCC supported groups such as Home-Start to assist with this. The early help support provided by KCC was not based solely on income but on a range of factors.

Members enquired as to the level of take up for free school meals and were advised that schools had an important role in identifying potentially eligible children. At schools, steps were taken to ensure that children in receipt of free school meals could not be identified as such.

Dover, Deal and District Citizens Advice Bureau (Jan Stewart, Chief Officer)

Although Dover, Deal and District Citizens Advice Bureau had not been able to see people face-to-face during the pandemic, they had worked to ensure that everyone could be seen by alternative methods such as by telephone or online. The Dover, Deal and District Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) had dealt with 4,804 people (87% of which were on less than £480 per month) since August 2020 about a range of issues, not just food poverty. This including assisting with housing issues, benefits and mental health issues. They were also still helping people with issues that had occurred during the first phase of lockdown.

For the period August – December 2020, the Dover, Deal and District Citizens Advice Bureau had issued 330 food vouchers.

The Dover, Deal and District Citizens Advice Bureau had created a hardship fund of £7,000 to help those who had been unable to receive help elsewhere. The hardship fund was used to provide basic essentials but was now struggling to find grants to help feed people.

The Dover, Deal and District Citizens Advice Bureau had seen demand for its services increase by 12% per year on average over the last 10 years. Since April 2020 there had been a 393% increase in demand for services. However, the grant received by the Dover, Deal and District Citizens Advice Bureau had not increased in the last 8 years. In response to a question over what any increase in funding could be used for, Members were advised that an increase in the hardship fund or to recruit additional expertise in employment.

Riverside Centre, Dover (Maggie Paterson, Centre Manager)

The Riverside Centre supported people over 55 years and older with information, advice (including about benefits), support (including befriending services) and help with shopping for

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essentials. It had 93 clients. The biggest issue faced by people was access to facilities or the ability – mainly physical but some also lacked the knowledge - to cook.

A hardship fund had been created to provide hot meals for one week while a referral was made to a food bank and 17 referrals had been made in the last 12 months. It could also provide a loan if required while people were waiting for benefits. Those under 55 in need of support that contacted the Riverside Centre would be referred to Dover, Deal and District Citizens Advice Bureau.

Due to restrictions during lockdown Riverside was unable to provide meals at the centre and had started a meal delivery service which provided affordable and nutritional two course meals.

The service received some referrals from an NHS social provider. However, the lockdown had impacted on the usual methods it used to promote its services.

The Riverside Centre had following the first lockdown run a confidence building session for those whose mental health had been affected. The Centre had provided a vital resource to tackle social isolation before it had been forced to close due to lockdown measures.

Home-Start Dover (Tracy Perrow, Scheme Manager)

Home-Start provide support to families where at least one child was under 11 years of age. The work was undertaken by a small team supported by volunteers and Home-Start had seen a reduction in the number of volunteers available as part of the pandemic.

The principle of early intervention was important to achieving positive outcomes and Home-Start had funding to for intensive support (at least 3 contacts per week) which was shown to result in dramatic improvements.

The majority (80%) of the families being supported were due to poverty with the remainder due to disability. There were a number with large families (5 – 7 children) and often there was a lack of knowledge around cooking. This had been addressed through cookery demonstrations with donated fresh food before the coronavirus pandemic.

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Prior to the pandemic, Home-Start had worked with Tesco and Fareshare to distribute food to those in need. During the Pandemic, Home-Start had £1500 of ALDI vouchers (limited to food only) which had been distributed in £50 blocks to families. This helped free up income to be used to cover basic utility costs.

Home-Start received referrals from social services, schools and pre-schools and had 20 families on its waiting list. It had also seen a small number of families enter the area fleeing abuse that often had nothing with them and needed emergency support. They had seen an increase in families suffering from domestic abuse during the coronavirus pandemic.

They had also issued 25 food bank vouchers.

The Chairman thanked the attendees for their time and responses to the Committee's questions.

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Inquiry Report 3

Additional Information Provided to the Committee

BeChange

Since the start of the pandemic up until now Bechange have provided around 13,000 cooked meals for people in the community, 10,000 of which were delivered in lockdown1. There were many reasons for people being included in this scheme, including shielding, poor mental health, family issues, quarantining due to Covid. The one common factor for almost all beneficiaries was the lack of the financial means preventing them from putting measures into place, For example, no car or not enough fuel to travel to the larger supermarkets and not being able to afford "local" prices, sudden drop in income, increase in utility bills due to being in lockdown, not having digital means to order online, children off of school and struggling to find the money that having a family all at home costs.

We provided

- 55 emergency food boxes during lockdown 1 and a further 20 requests for our clients from the foodbank (prepared delivered by Deal area Foodbank)
- We also provided 550 packs of extra food during lockdown 1.
- Since September 1 we have worked with the Deal Area Foodbank and issued 24 foodbank Evouchers.
- We pick up free "still good to eat food" from Co-op and Tesco and make this available for people to pick up. There is no criteria for this, but in general people picking the fo]od up tend to be struggling - for example one person told us "this is really helpful, this bag of food helps us get through the weekend" since September 245 bags have been picked up by local people.

Together4Dover

During Lockdown we delivered fresh food parcels(surplus) to 40+ households in Dover. We are currently using funding to provide free fresh food for families referred to us. We also delivered hot meals to.

Since the beginning of 2nd Lockdown we have supported 17 families with free food 16 of which were referred through Foodbank.

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Cinque Ports Community Kitchen

With regard to submitting information, we don't have statistical info, just anecdotal from direct contact with clients over the past 7 years.

One issue that we have encountered several times and that worries us is the difficulty single people who are long term unemployed face regarding low income. There are people living alone in our community, in their middle years, who have not managed to get or keep a job because they just don't fit the mould. They may have a level of autism, undiagnosed, which impacts their employment prospects but doesn't entitle them to any additional support. We see it as a cruelty and failing in the welfare system and also in the employment structure which excludes these people, permanently.

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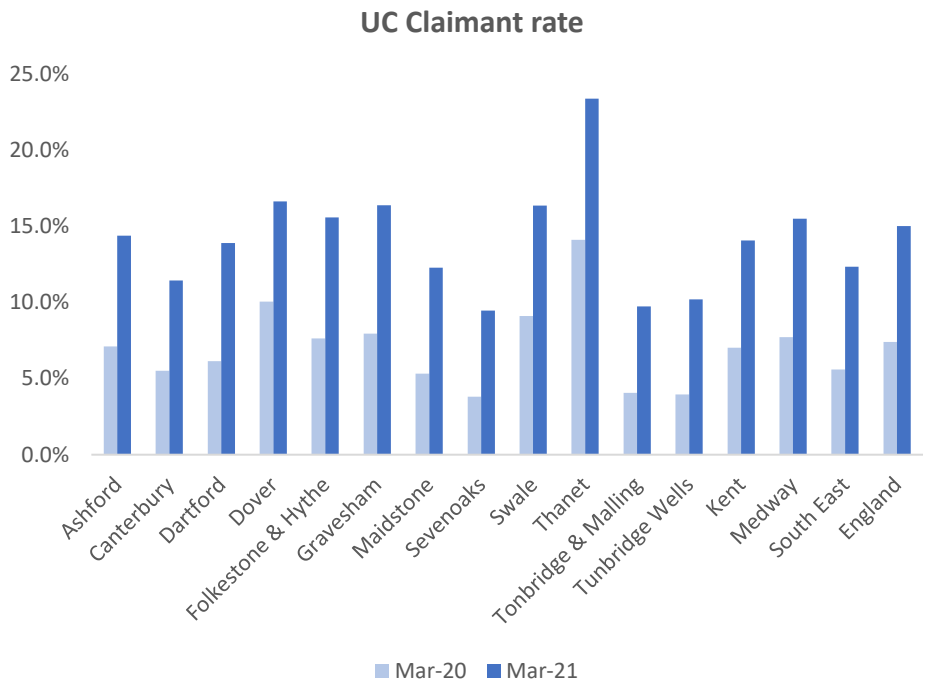
Inquiry Report 4

Kent County Council Area Profiles

Universal Credit Claimants

Source: DWP Stat Xplore

	Mar-21		Mar-20	
	Number	%	Number	%
Ashford	11,146	14.4%	5,508	7.1%
Canterbury	11,990	11.4%	5,780	5.5%
Dartford	9,698	13.9%	4,283	6.1%
Dover	11,511	16.6%	6,961	10.0%
Folkestone & Hythe	10,283	15.6%	5,031	7.6%
Gravesham	10,714	16.4%	5,203	8.0%
Maidstone	12,707	12.3%	5,505	5.3%
Sevenoaks	6,652	9.5%	2,683	3.8%
Swale	14,746	16.3%	8,215	9.1%
Thanet	19,104	23.4%	11,526	14.1%
Tonbridge & Malling	7,728	9.7%	3,222	4.1%
Tunbridge Wells	7,303	10.2%	2,832	4.0%
Kent	133,570	14.1%	66,749	7.0%
Medway	27,227	15.5%	13,575	7.7%
South East	692,963	12.3%	314,043	5.6%
England	5,257,853	15.0%	2,591,995	7.4%



Inquiry Report 5

Information Provided by Councillor H M Williams

Child Poverty in Dover. Pre covid.

2018/19 figures from DWP (source Analytics, at Kent County Council www.kent.gov.uk/research)

18.6% (3,814) of all children(under 16 yrs) in Dover District are in **absolute low-income families**. This is the 2nd highest proportion in Kent (highest is Thanet at 21.4%). (the national average is 15.3%)

children in Dover in absolute low-income families.

in-work families	out-of-work families	total
2309	1505	3814
lone-parent households	couple households	
1736	2074	3810
45.50%	54.40%	

KCC has ranked all wards in Kent by highest %age children in absolute low-income families. Dover wards have the following positions.

- 1. Castle ward, Dover 48% (120 children)
- 9. Town & Pier ward, Dover 26.5% (107 children)
- 10. St Radigunds, Dover, 26.3% (402 children)

children in Dover in absolute low-income families.			
in-work families	out-of-work families	total	
2309	1505	3814	
lone-parent households	couple households		
1736	2074	3810	
45.50%	54.40%		

Figures are also available for children in **relative low-income families**, with Dover having 4,379 children living in relative low-income families. The wards affected are Castle ward (54.8% of dover children), St Radigund's (29.8% of dover children) and Tower Hamlets (29.7% of dover children).

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Universal Credit Claimants in Dover District

Nov-20 11,336. %age increase since March 2020:62.9%

Number of UC Claimants households below the Free school Meals threshold in Dover District: 5,960

Number of UC claimants households below the Free prescription Threshold in Dover District: 7,140
(figures from Financial Hardship Summary Indicators Jan 2021 produce by Strategic Commissioning Analytics, Kent County Council)

Unemployment in Dover wards Dec 2020	(sorted by number unemployed))				
	number unemployed	**unemployment rate**		**number change since previous year**	**% change since previous year**
Town and Castle	720	12.5%		310	75.6%
St Radigunds	505	10.7%		185	57.8%
Buckland	395	7.9%		140	54.9%
Tower Hamlets	390	12.5%		145	59.2%
Aylesham, Eythorne & Sheperdswell	330	5.1%		145	78.4%
Mill Hill	310	6.5%		165	113.6%
Middle Deal	275	6.8%		145	111.5%
North Deal	270	5.9%		125	86.2%
Eastry Rural	205	5.2%		130	173.3%
Little Stour and Ashtone	205	4.9%		130	173.3%
Walmer	200	5.4%		115	135.3%
Sandwich	180	5.0%		110	157.1%
Whitfiled.	170	4.8%		75	78.9%
Guston Kingsdown & St Margarets	165	4.1%		95	135.7%
Maxton & ElmsVale	130	5.1%		70	116.7%
Dover Downs and River	105	2.6%		60	133.3%
Alkam and Capel le Ferne	90	5.2%		65	260.0%
totals	4645			2210	

Source: Strategic Commissioning – Analytics, Kent County Council, statistical bulletin, last updated 26 January 2021

Pension Credit claimants
Dover Feb 2020 2,976.

Dover Local Tax support, Pensioner Claimants

Q1 2021: 3,559

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District	Term and Year	School Type	Number of Pupils in Year R to 11	Number Eligible for FSM	% Eligible FSM
Kent	**January 2021**	**Primary**	**126216**	**27510**	**21.8**
Dover	January 2021	Primary	8449	2475	29.3
Kent	**October 2020**	**Primary**	**125939**	**25303**	**20.1**
Dover	October 2020	Primary	8430	2301	27.3
Difference Kent			**277**	**2207**	**1.7**
Difference Dover			**19**	**174**	**2.0**
Estimated PP Funding Lost - Dover				**£234,030**	
Kent	**January 2021**	**Secondary**	**87804**	**15371**	**17.5**
Dover	January 2021	Secondary	6397	1356	21.2
Kent	**October 2020**	**Secondary**	**87885**	**14633**	**16.7**
Dover	October 2020	Secondary	6405	1322	20.6
Difference Kent			**-81**	**738**	**0.9**
Difference Dover			**-8**	**34**	**0.6**
Estimated PP Funding Lost - Dover				**£32,470**	

Notes:

1) Data refers to those pupils eligible for FSM at the time of the each census.

2) Data includes academies and free schools.

3) Dually registered pupils are only included at their main base.

4) Pupil Premium Deprivation (FSM Ever 6) funding is £1345 per primary pupil

5) Pupil Premium Deprivation (FSM Ever 6) funding is £955 per secondary pupil

References provided by Councillor H M Williams:

https://foodjusticefinder.com/healthystart/?mc_cid=23eff2f448&mc_eid=4d43866c5e

https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/facts-and-figures-about-Kent/area-profiles

Financial Hardship summary indicators, January 2021, Kent County Council

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Section Five

Recommendations

Summary of the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Council

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Recommendations

4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has at its meeting held on xxx made the following recommendations to the full Council:

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